

PC ACTION REPORT

2015: I1-I5 – Texas Medical Center

APPLICANT: City of Houston Planning & Development

KEY MAP: 492-493, 532-533

JURISDICTION: City of Houston

LAMBERT: 5255, 5354-5356

DISTRICT/PRECINCT: City Council: C, D, K
Harris County Pct.: 1

PC ACTION REPORT

Planning Commission has taken action on the following amendments (I-1 through I-5) to the Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan as recommended by the City of Houston Planning & Development Department (P&D) on August 13, 2015. Refer to the Texas Medical Center (TMC) Mobility Study for additional details and background on the amendments.

	ID	STREET NAME	STREET SEGMENT	AMENDMENT REQUEST	STAFF RECOMMENDATION	PC ACTION
I	1.	Dryden Road	Main Street to Fannin Street	Add Dryden Road between Main Street and Fannin Street as a Major Collector (MJ-4-70)	Recommend	Approve
	2.	Fannin Street	S Braeswood Boulevard to Greenbriar Drive	Reclassify Fannin Street between S Braeswood Boulevard and Greenbriar Drive from a 6 lane Principal Thoroughfare (P-6-100) to a 4 lane Major Thoroughfare (T-4-100)	Recommend	Approve
	3.	Hermann Drive	Main Street to Almeda Road	Reclassify Hermann Drive between Main Street and Almeda Road from a Major Thoroughfare (T-4-80) to a Minor Collector (MN-2-80)	Recommend: Hermann Drive: Reclassify Hermann Drive between Main Street and Almeda Road from a 4-lane Major Thoroughfare (T-4-80) to a 2-lane minimum 80' Minor Collector (MN-2-80)	Approve
	4.	MacGregor Drive	Almeda Road to SH 288	Reclassify MacGregor Drive between Almeda Road and SH 288 from a Major Thoroughfare (T-4-70) to a Major Collector (MJ-2-70)	Recommend: MacGregor Drive: Reclassify MacGregor Drive between Almeda Road and SH 288 from a 4-lane Major Thoroughfare (T-4-70) to a 2-lane Minor Collector (MN-2-70)	Approve
	5.	Holcombe Boulevard	SH 288 to S. Braeswood Boulevard/N. MacGregor Way	Reclassify Holcombe Boulevard between SH 288 and S. Braeswood Boulevard/N. MacGregor Way from an 80' right-of-way Principal Thoroughfare (P-6-80) to a 100' right-of-way Principal Thoroughfare (P-6-100)	Recommend	Approve

PC ACTION REPORT

JUSTIFICATION:

The amendments herein are designed to provide multi-modal solutions to address the near and long-term mobility needs in the Texas Medical Center area. This report includes detailed justifications for those amendments (I-3: Hermann Drive and I-4: MacGregor Drive) in which the alternatives have been selected as the preferred option for Planning Commission approval. These alternatives were identified early in the MTFP amendment process in coordination with the Planning Commission and the Public Works and Engineering Department (PWE). Refer to the Texas Medical Center Mobility Study for additional background information and details on all of the recommended amendments.

I-3: Hermann Drive & I-4: MacGregor Drive

Hermann Drive is an east-west roadway that extends from Main Street on the west to Alameda Road on the east and transitions to MacGregor Drive, which terminates at the southbound frontage road of SH 288. Both roadways have been on the MTFP as Major Thoroughfares since its inception in 1942. By 1955, the MTFP identified a right-of-way (ROW) connection from North MacGregor Drive to Hermann Drive to provide a continuous east-west connection through this area prior to the extension of SH 288. With the extension of SH 288 in early 1980's, MacGregor Drive terminated along the frontage road. North MacGregor Way was removed from the MTFP map in 1977. The resulting Hermann/MacGregor Drive segment is approximately one mile long and carries less than 5,000 vehicles per day.

Hermann/MacGregor Drive mostly provides local access to the Houston's Museum District and the Hermann Park, which outlines the entire southern edge of the corridor. The northern part of the corridor is home to a variety of institutional uses such as hospitals and museums, in addition to a number of new multi-family housing. Hermann Park Plaza, located at the corner of MacGregor Way and Alameda Road, is a new 6-story 193 unit apartment complex (96 units per acre), currently under construction.

Hermann Drive between Main Street and Jackson Street has five-lanes of travel, two eastbound lanes and one westbound lane, with two on-street parking lanes, one on either side of the street. East of Jackson Street, Hermann Drive narrows to a four-lane roadway with the outermost lanes serving as parking lanes. This lane configuration continues onto MacGregor Drive. Wide sidewalks are present on both sides of the roadway to serve the high pedestrian activity in this area. METRO Light Rail navigates across Hermann Drive via San Jacinto Street and Fannin Street with a station north of Ewing Street, one block away.

P&D staff recommends the reclassification of both roadways as two-lane Minor Collectors with a minimum 80' right of way for Hermann Drive and a 70' right of way for MacGregor Drive. Even though the corridor is home to a number of major destinations, the Minor Collector designation is appropriate due to its short length and low vehicular through volume. The corridor mainly provides local circulation and parking for residents and visitors to the park and the museums. To this end, City of Houston is currently looking for ways to implement traffic calming measures along the corridor to increase pedestrian safety.

PC ACTION REPORT

Houston Complete Streets and Transportation Plan Considerations

MTFP classification	Minor Collector
Number of travel lanes	2
Proposed right-of-way	80'/90' (Hermann) 70' (MacGregor)
(Multi-modal classification) MMC	Urban Mixed Use Street
Context	Mixed Use – Civic and Institutional, High density Residential
Bicycle	Yes, Shared Use Trail
Pedestrian	Yes
Parking	Yes, on-street parking on either side
Transit	METRO Red Line crossing over Hermann Street at San Jacinto Street and Fannin Street

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Texas Medical Center (TMC) in conjunction with the City completed the Texas Medical Center Mobility Study in 2014 in a continued effort to advance the recommendation from the City Mobility Planning (CMP) Phase I (See the appendix for more information). The TMC is the largest medical center in the world with 92,500 employees located just south of Downtown Houston. The primary study area is bounded by Hermann Drive/Sunset Boulevard to the north, Almeda Road to the east, Holly Hall Street to the south, and Greenbriar Drive to the west. The purpose of the study was to determine appropriate multi-modal solutions to address the near and long-term mobility needs of the TMC study area.

Most of the thoroughfares evaluated within the study have existed on the MTFP since its inception in 1942. Despite the introduction of the freeways (US 59 and SH 288) that limited connectivity with adjoining areas, the urban street grid characteristic of the area north of Holcombe Boulevard has remained relatively intact. The area surrounding the TMC has experienced tremendous growth over the years with TMC's expansion of its south campus and redevelopment of nearby neighborhoods/properties for supporting uses. This trend is projected to continue. By 2035, employment in the TMC area is projected to grow by almost 60% to over 166,000 jobs, according to Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC). On the contrary, a modest growth in population (14%) is expected during the same time period.

TMC Population and Employment Projections

Year	Population	Population Density (Persons/Acre)	% Change	Jobs	Job Density (Jobs/Acre)	% Change
2012	25,804	13.5	-	104,790	54.9	-
2035	29,439	15.4	14.1%	166,731	87.3	59.1%
Change 2012 to 2035	3,635	1.9	14.1%	61,941	32.4	59.1%

Source: Demographic Projections by H-GAC

The TMC study area consists of a number of Major Thoroughfares and Collectors that provide access to and from the freeways and within the area. Access to the TMC is further enhanced

PC ACTION REPORT

by the METRO Red Line and many buses that provide travel options for employees, students, and visitors from all over the greater Houston region. As one of the largest activity centers in the region, many of the thoroughfares in the TMC area are over capacity and experience heavy congestion. Unlike the central business district, the TMC private and public street grid does not have the same uniformity to effectively distribute traffic. The block sizes in the area are very large and circulation within these large blocks is typically provided by private streets. In addition, Rice University Campus and Hermann Park present another challenge to street connectivity, which burdens the existing thoroughfares. Over the next 20 years, TMC plans to add another 28 million square feet of healthcare-related developments that will bring more visitors which requires more parking, wider roads and more travel options to serve this demand. Given the limited right-of-way and the cost associated with new road construction, there is a great need for multi-modal solutions to meet the growing travel demands in the TMC area. See the appendix for corridor specific recommendations from the TMC Mobility Study.

The Texas Medical Center Mobility Study report can be found on the City's webpage:
<http://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/tod/tmcstudy.html>.

Information about City Mobility Planning (CMP) can be found on the City's webpage:
<http://houstontx.gov/planning/mobility/cmp>

ALTERNATIVES STUDIED:

The P&D Department has identified and evaluated the following alternatives to the amendments proposed above:

I-3: Hermann Drive: Reclassify Hermann Drive between Main Street and Almeda Road from a 4-lane Major Thoroughfare (T-4-80/90) to a 2-lane minimum 80' Minor Collector (MN-2-80/90)

I-4: MacGregor Drive: Reclassify MacGregor Drive between Almeda Road and SH 288 from a 4-lane Major Thoroughfare (T-4-70) to a 2-lane 70' Minor Collector (MN-2-70)